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MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS,

PUBLISHED AS

AN APPENDIX

TO THE

"DYING EXPERIENCE"

OF THE LATE

REV. ISAAC BRIDGMAN, A.M.,

Minister of St. John's Chapel, West Street, Walworth, Surrey.

LONDON:

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THE "Dying Experience" of the late Rev. Isaac Bridgman, A. M., published at the beginning of the last year, having been favourably received and read by Christians of various denominations, many of whom have expressed the spiritual benefit they have derived from its perusal, it has been considered desirable to send forth a short account of his conversion and early ministry, with a view to shew that the commencement of his Christian career was marked with the same sincere and earnest piety which characterized his latter days. A few miscellaneous papers have also been added.

To those who knew the late Mr. Bridgman, this will afford a pleasing appendix to the death-bed narrative.

It has been committed to the press without the least hope of pecuniary advantage, but rather with the full expectation of a contrary result, at the same time with the confident hope that God will bless the truth contained therein to the comfort and establishment of those humble disciples of Christ into whose hands it may providentially fall.

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LETTER

FROM THE LATE REV. J. WILCOX,

Afternoon Lecturer at St. George's Church, Southwark,

Under whose Ministry, at that Church, the conversion of the Rev. ISAAC BRIDGMAN took place; some particulars of which we here insert.

MR. BRIDGMAN, then about 18 years of age, was taking a walk with a friend on Sunday afternoon —May 18th, 1807 (regardless of the day), when observing many persons going into the church, he was induced to follow them. The above clergyman took his text from 1st chapter of Isaiah, 18th verse: "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: for though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The sermon was accompanied with Almighty power,—it reached his heart,—he was awakened, convinced of sin, and brought to true repentance.

This letter was written by Rev. John Wilcox, on being informed by Mr. Bridgman of the interesting circumstance:—

Epsom, Oct. 3, 1809.

My dear young friend in Christ,—

THE first moments of leisure are now come, and I cheerfully devote them to hold converse with you about the most important of all concerns, those of the immortal, never dying soul. The account you are enabled to give me of God's gracious dealing with you demands my gratitude, and excites my thankfulness; that I, a poor, unworthy minister of Jesus, who do not deserve to be named in the ministry, should have been in the smallest degree instrumental in your conversion, is an additional cause of praise. It cannot but be highly gratifying to me to perceive that your views of the economy of redemption are clear and scriptural, and, I trust, I may confidently say, you have had a better teacher than man. Yes, my dear friend, the Lord appears to have done great things for you already, whereof I rejoice, and he will do yet abundantly more, even till his grace has matured you for endless glory. Nor is it a matter of small comfort to me to observe how entirely you ascribe the praise to that Being to whom alone it belongs. I am a great debtor to divine love and mercy, like yourself. *I*, like *you* and all mankind, by nature, knew not God, but was called in his time out of darkness into the marvellous light of his glorious

gospel, and commanded to go forth from among my relatives and connections, reproached and persecuted, they of mine own house being my greatest foes, to a distant part of the kingdom, there to teach and to preach Christ crucified. In a mysterious manner I have been brought to London, against my prayers and contrary to my wishes; but when I hear of such effects being produced by one who has nothing but plainness of speech and integrity of design to recommend him, I take encouragement that I am brought hither for some good purpose. Although your communication cannot but strengthen me, receiving the account of your conversion as I do, to be a voice from Heaven, saying "Go on;" yet I have much additional cause of thankfulness, that I am not puffed up with pride; through great grace, I am enabled to give the honour to whom alone it is due, and join you in ascriptions of lively praise to the God of all power. It should seem from your description, that you were very far gone in the paths of infidelity. I congratulate you, my dear fellow-sinner, that the Lord hath put a bridle in your mouth, and a hook in your nose.

This brings to my memory a circumstance which once took place in my native country. Two gentlemen (my acquaintances) were benighted on their return home; their path led

down a prodigiously high hill; the night was dark as pitch, a calm and still atmosphere, when on a sudden a flash of lightning shewed them that had they taken one step more,—for they were on the verge of the rock,—they must have been dashed in pieces. Now is not this something like your case spiritually? You were going on satisfied with your path, you had got to the brink of the pit, infidelity had led you on in its darkness to the precipice; one step more, and you might have perished eternally; then, in that critical moment, the light of the Holy Spirit flashed on your mind, and you were enabled to see and avoid your danger;—Hallelujah! to him that hath loved you, and snatched you as a brand from the burning. You request my advice as to the future. This may be comprised in a few words: make the law and the gospel your constant subject of reading; never go into the world without previous prayer, for he who does is like a sailor putting to sea without his compass; never retire to bed without a grateful acknowledgment of God's goodness through the day: these are well-known duties, but too frequently neglected, even by professing Christians. Be not high-minded, but fear; fear lest you should be betrayed into lukewarmness or false security. One said, "Thou hast made my mountain so strong, that I shall never be moved,"

yet he fell. To guard against backsliding into the world, " remember Lot's wife ; " to preserve you from falling, call to mind the sin and contrition of Peter, " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." To encourage you under persecution, frequently think on those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. When you are tempted, look up to Jesus who was tempted in all points, like as we are ; and he has directed us to the use of the same weapons, to resist the devil and his wiles. " It is written :" when you are in darkness, and have no light, for you must not expect uninterrupted sunshine, then lean on Jesus Christ, have faith on him, and you will go on conquering through his grace, which is sufficient for you, and shall be given in every time of need. Finally, be unwearied in waiting on the Lord, in public and private ; let Joshua's resolution be yours ; let your light shine forth ; never be ashamed of your master, but let your actions, like livery, proclaim whose service you are employed in, and try on all suitable occasions to win souls.

Remember me in your approaches to a throne of mercy, and believe me, my dear fellow-debtor to unmerited love,

Your servant in Christ Jesus,

JOHN WILCOX.

EXTRACTS

From the private Memoranda of Mr. Bridgman, written at an early period of his life.

Saturday, April 18, 1812.

Now here I'll raise my Ebenezer, for hitherto, by God's help, have I come to commemorate the completion of my *twenty-third* year. How strictly do the words of Jacob apply, "Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage;" but yet the tender mercy of my Lord has been so great; He not only hath spared me three, but three and twenty years, to see if I would bear fruit or not—And what am I now? By the *grace* of God I am what I am, if I differ from what I once was; and in an entire dependence on that grace, I hope to hold on, and hold out unto the end. May I be enabled not only every year, but every day and hour, to surrender myself to Him, who hath kindly led me, and fed me, all my days in the wilderness, and hath brought me thus far on my journey.

Thursday, April 23, 1812.

I again found it good to draw nigh unto God in his holy temple; I experienced there much trembling of spirit, and much love to my gracious Lord, who this night assured me that "He would lead me by his counsel and afterwards receive me to glory."

Saturday, May 9, 1812.

Went this evening to a social meeting of Sunday-school teachers, and found my mind at happy liberty. How delightful to usher in the sacred day of rest by prayer and praises: thus may I be found doing when my labour here below shall be nearly done, and my happy soul about to enter on that pure, that sacred, that eternal rest, prepared for the people of God.

Thursday, April 21, 1814.

I heard a discourse this evening which reminds me of a pleasing circumstance which occurred when first I knew the Lord. At the time of my first love, my soul hungered and thirsted more for the bread and waters of life than at the present

time. One Thursday I had counted the hours, almost the minutes, when I should go from the tents of Kedar to the Hill of Zion, the House of God; but a relative was suddenly indisposed, and I was prevented going; yet I thought, although duty compelled me to stay, I need not be without God's blessing. With that view I opened the book of God, and these words crossed my eyes: "And the Lord strengthened him." It was enough. I believe, nay, if my religious experience is not an entire fable, I am sure, the Lord strengthened me more in holy meditation on his word at home than I have sometimes enjoyed at the house of prayer. Simple as this may appear, it enforced on my mind a useful lesson I had been taught before, viz., that He who ordains the means of grace can give us, when we are lawfully prevented them, the grace of the means.

Saturday, April 23, 1814.

How mistaken are good men sometimes! Elijah thought that he alone was left of all the servants of God; but what said the Lord unto him? and how often have I uncharitably thought that the whole multitudes in the streets of

London, as they passed, were all walking the downward road to hell. In an individual instance I was this night pleasingly disappointed. Riding homewards from Woodford Bridge, I was overtaken by a stranger; he slackened his pace to mine, and for a time we observed a mutual silence; at last he broke it: "It is fine weather, Sir." "It is," I replied; "unless I had witnessed to-day the difference in the appearance of the creation I could scarcely have credited it." Silence again ensued, but I thought it was a shame we should ride so far together without an attempt to improve the time by useful conversation. I would therefore speak a word for God at a venture,—who can tell? "Indeed, Sir," I said, "I think God is evidently proving to us, that not only seed-time and harvest, but summer, as well as winter, shall not fail." "Ah, Sir," the stranger quickly replied, "it would be well for us if we could eye God in every minute circumstance of our lives, as well in providence as in grace." This was a sufficient introduction, and we, who awhile ago could not tell but the other was a footpad, were soon as intimate as though we had known each other for years. "As face answers to face," so does the heart of one Christian man to another. The darkness of the night prevented the sight of our natural faces, but the light of

God's Spirit enabled us to read each other's hearts; and, as we travelled the road to London, held sweet communion by the way on the privileges London Christians enjoy, and the use we ought to make of them, which seemed to be this, that as the ordinances of the Gospel were means, and Christ the substance of salvation, we ought to use the one to lead us to the other. Thus did God bless us by the way.

Thursday, April 28, 1814.

It is an important inquiry, who then is my neighbour? Not only my father, my brother, my relatives, my friends, and my countrymen, but the whole human race,—yea, more, even my enemy; then, if he hunger, let me feed him; if he thirst, then let me give him drink; and if he is perishing for lack of knowledge,—as I would be clear of his blood when God shall require his soul,—as I would save him from everlasting misery,—as I would desire to shine as a star in my Heavenly Father's kingdom for ever, oh! let me teach man what he must do to be saved, and say, "Flee from the wrath to come."

Friday, May 18, 1814.

This morning's service at St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, recalls to my remembrance a wish that came across my mind, while in those sacred walls, I presume full fifteen years ago, viz. that the minister (Rev. G. Patrick, now in glory) might convert me. Impressions I did receive, and had received, but, like the morning cloud, they had soon disappeared, and God granted not that which I requested; and yet the Lord knew the desire of my soul, and, in his own set time, did call me home to his fold, and, with a shepherd's care, hath watched over me ever since,—a wondrous mercy. I was about ten years old when I desired that which I now have, and yet for ten years more did I stray from his fold; and, though often called, would not hear, or, what is worse, would not obey; and, oh, my soul! what a wondrous mercy it is that, when thou didst desire to enter in, the door was *not* shut. Bless the Lord, oh, my soul!

Oh, my soul! since God in mercy has brought thee to the close of another week, how do matters stand between God and thyself? Are you afraid to put the question close? Then there is the greatest reason that you should; but, on reflection, I have to say that this week has been

passed with more lively thoughts of God and divine things, and more desires after greater spiritual attainments, and more earnest longings to enter the service of my great Master; but it would look like boasting to say more than that I hope the Lord has been with me this week, and given me peace. Oh, my soul! still keep near to Him, and beg Him earnestly ever to keep near to thee.

This is a memorable day to me in the short annals of my life. It is just seven years to-day since I first heard the Word of God to profit. Oh, my soul! never forget the sovereignty, the love, the mercy of God that day; there were many sinners that day in St. George's Church, but to thee (I will not say to thee only) was the word of salvation sent. Oh! never forget that part of thy dear minister's sermon, which, through God's sacred influence, moved thee to embrace the great salvation. It was expostulation when, from Isaiah i. 18, he did shew poor ungodly sinners how merciful and kind their Lord was in condescending to reason with them. I say forget it not, for let it be a main part of thine addresses, if God, in his Providence, should put thee into the ministry; and now say, oh, my soul! since thou hast served thy Lord, as it were an apprenticeship, what thinkest thou of Christ as a

Master? Has not his yoke been easy and his burden light? Yea, has not the service been perfect freedom? Well; and say, wilt thou leave Him now, and seek out a new one? Oh, now my soul, I know thou canst not permit this, but art ready to say with Peter, Lord to whom should I go, since thou only hast the words of Eternal Life!

Sunday.

I have this day seen, as indeed I may see every day, cause, much cause, to bless God for His special goodness to me. I allude to the circumstance of poor old B——— of Harringworth; I found him as usual, languid in body, cheerful in mind, but distressed in temporal circumstances. What could I do? Restricted as my income is,—oh! waste not then that little on trifles, but see, oh! my soul, and spare what thou canst for such poor but truly-necessitous cases as these. I found my mind at a happy liberty to speak of the things of God to the poor old man and his wife; their readiness to hear the word of God and thankfulness for my poor visit fill my heart with various emotions of pity, shame, love, and grief, and make me more and more to long for that time, when, if it is well pleasing unto God, I shall be fully employed in this so arduous, so

delightful, and so important a duty as instructing the ignorant, comforting the comfortless, and helping poor sinners on in their journey to Heaven. Lord keep me from impatience, but since my time is short, oh! haste it. I spent an hour afterwards with a Christian brother of the Baptist denomination, and found again, what I knew before, that Christians, while they hold the fundamentals of religion, may still live in love together, although they differ in smaller matters.

Sunday, the last day in the year.

Well, my soul, thou wilt lose a valuable friend to-night at 12 o'clock, whom thou wilt see no more for ever. He has been thy constant companion by night and by day. Oh! dost thou not remember what an encouraging word he brought thee on the first day of this year by one of God's ambassadors? It was this—"I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee;" and hast thou not, oh! my soul, found it so ever since? Then consider, too, how many mercies, pardons, how many helps and deliverances, how many kindnesses and favours have been vouchsafed thee this year. Bless the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits, since he has crowned thy life with loving-kindness, and this, yea, every year,

with tender mercies. But where will this friend go? Among the years that were before the flood;—thou wilt see him no more for ever. Let me hope that I shall be spared to see another on to-morrow's morn. I hope that it may prove the best I have yet enjoyed, and may I prove most faithful unto him, and be determined, by God's help, to redeem the time, seeing that my days have been so evil! It is a solemn time, oh! my soul, and a time much calculated to stir up serious reflections on thy part, and to prompt serious determination for thy future life. Here, then, thou shouldst make a pause as at an inn, or town, or milestone, and inquire where thou art, how far thou hast come, and whether thou art in the right road. Come, oh! my soul, be not a stranger to thyself, I beseech thee; neglect not to examine how matters stand between thy God and thee; if wrong, then seek to have them rectified; if right, thank God, take courage and go on. And oh! may God, thy God, assist thee in the important search, that so thou mayest be impartial and know the truth of this matter, and now dedicate thyself again to His service, who did not disdain to offer up himself for thee and thy salvation: consider Jesus, he is deserving of all thy esteem and regard; and yet, alas! how little he has had.

The following is a Farewell Address, delivered to the Teachers of the City Sunday School, Blackfriars, on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 28, 1814, by Mr. Bridgman, previous to his going to Oxford, from 3rd Epistle of John, 2nd verse—"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

God is love, and every one who loveth God, loveth his brother also. The love of man to man for Christ's sake, is a Divine principle, and it is recorded in the Scriptures of truth as an indubitable evidence, that the possessor of it is an heir of glory, for it is emphatically written, "We know,"—mark it, Sirs, not merely we hope, we expect, we could wish, but we *know*, it amounts to a certainty,—that we have passed from death unto life,—and why? Is it because God hath told us so? No. Have we seen a vision, or hath an angel from the courts above descended to tell us that *our* names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life? No. Whence then cometh the happy assurance? "Because we love the brethren." May I be permitted to relate my own experience, that when darkness has beclouded my mind, and

scarcely a ray of hope, or ground of confidence towards God, was left beside, this Scripture has been my comfort, with all my sins and backslidings of heart; this one evidence of my sonship was left, namely, that I loved the people of God better than others. Feel you not this love to the children of God? Whenever you see one of the saints of the Most High, though you might not have known him before, yet does not your heart feel knit unto his, and like David and Jonathan, you become as the soul of one man?

Yes, if the mind which was in Christ be in you also, I know it is the case. You inquire not his sect; but the question is, are you a Christian? Love you the Lord Jesus? If so, give me the right hand of fellowship, and let us walk together in the light of the Lord. Such a spirit as seems to run through the whole writings of the holy and loving Apostle, who first expressed the earnest wish we have for our consideration this afternoon. I think that it is the duty of every minister of Jesus, and of every teacher of babes too, to take advantage of those scripture expressions which inculcate the spirit of love, because love is the very essence of religion, and is the fulfilling of the law. No action, however laudable in itself; no duty, however laborious; no sacrifice, however expensive, is acceptable unto

God, unless it proceed from this divine principle of love; and then even two mites, when more cannot be bestowed, will be accepted by the God of Heaven, if given with a willing mind. Let me then address you in the Apostle's words, and say, Beloved!—Beloved of God the Father from eternity—Beloved of God the Son, who manifested his love in shedding his precious blood on Calvary's mount, and now manifests it by ever making intercession for us—Beloved of the Holy Spirit, who enlightened your dark minds, and brought you from the path of error into the way of truth, and is engaged to train you up for glory—Beloved of the holy angels, who watched your infantile years, who often have invisibly held you up, lest at any time you should dash your foot against a stone; who rejoiced at your conversion, and tuned their harps anew when you were born again, and who doubtless will watch over you until they have carried you into Abraham's bosom, and landed you in safety on Canaan's happy shore—Beloved of all the saints,—it may be of the spirits of just men now made perfect in Heaven, but certainly of all the children of God in the vale of tears, who recognize you as belonging to the family of the Most High. Thus, " Beloved, I wish, above *all things*, that thou mayest prosper and be in health." These words lead us to notice the following par-

ticulars:—First, Wherein does the prosperity and health of the soul consist? and then the Apostle's earnest wish for the prosperity and health of his beloved Gaius, as leading us to inculcate and encourage an affectionate spirit towards all our brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus; and, last, conclude with such reflections as may appear suitable for the occasion. Oh, may the Divine and Holy Spirit which filled the heart and soul of John with such love towards his disciple, fill our hearts, too, with sacred love for each other and the whole family of Heaven, that we may now rejoice together in the hope of the glory of God, and henceforth more earnestly desire and long for the peace and prosperity of the whole church of God! And first, we are to consider wherein the prosperity of the soul consists. "Beloved, I wish, above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health," &c. These words, I am aware, refer to the temporal welfare of Gaius; but it was on this presumption, viz. that his soul was in prosperity and health, and therefore the Apostle wishes that soul and body might agree. We shall, however, apply the words to the former estate, viz. prosperity of soul. The first evidence of prosperity of soul is the possession of divine light and life. "Whereas," said one of old, "I was once blind, now I see." Can it

be well with us if all is dark within,—no light, no life, and without hope, and without God in the world? Ah, no! A state of nature is not a state of health, for thus we are described by the Prophet: "From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is nothing but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores;" but, blessed be God, there is a balm in Gilead, and there is a physician there,—"the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and "Jesus is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." See here, then, the commencement of health and true prosperity. Let a man, like Naaman the Syrian, be rich; let him be honourable; let him be a mighty man of valour; let him be held in estimation by the high and the low; yet if he has the leprosy of sin cleaving to him, if he is unwashed, unsanctified, unholy, he is sore diseased, and unless the good Samaritan passes by, he will surely perish with his wounds. *Your* souls, then, my beloved, are not in health and prosperity, if you, who by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, have not been quickened by the grace of God. Permit me affectionately to inquire, Do you possess this evidence of health and prosperity? Are you born again? Have the eyes of your understanding been opened to see the excellency of the know-

ledge of Christ above all other knowledge? By this criterion you may ascertain the certainty of your condition. Do you love God? Do you hate sin? If so, you are born again, not of water, but by the Spirit of God; and, beloved, I wish, above all things, that thou mayest continue to be in health and prosperity.

A second evidence of soul prosperity is a meek and quiet spirit, sometimes called a contrite heart, but generally expressed by humility. If the Lord hath begun a work of grace in your hearts, you will gladly acknowledge the work to be of him, and adoringly say,—"By the grace of God I am what I am." If he hath turned your feet from the destructive paths of sin to the delightful ways of holiness and peace, you will with wonder, adoration, and praise, cry out,—"Who hath made me to differ? once I knew not, once I loved not God, and my feet were taking hasty strides down to the gate of hell; but, 'Oh! to grace how great a debtor!' the Lord himself passed by, and it was a time of love, and he said unto me,—Live! A life sprang up within my soul, and now the life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me;* and though I am born again, that grace which gave me life must preserve that life, and bring me on to glory and to God." Yes, beloved, the soul

that prospers knows it has no strength, and therefore looks unto the hills from whence alone it can come. It depends on Jesus, as well for spiritual as temporal food. It is submissive to all the dispensations of the Lord, afflictive as well as prosperous, and always desires to say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," assured of this, that he must be safe in his Heavenly Father's hand, confident of His wisdom in directing, His goodness in appointing; even when he cannot tell why or wherefore the Lord does it, like Aaron he holds his peace. Thus, while the child of God does justly, and loves mercy, he walks humbly with his God, disclaiming all merit, all power, all goodness but what is centred in Christ, who is the head of the church, of which he is a member. Say, beloved, have ye this evidence, that your souls prosper and are in health? Know you any thing of that experience which caused Job to say, "therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes?" When you say at church, "Christ have mercy upon me!" feel you any thing of that contrition which drew forth from the publican that vehement cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" Depend you on Christ for all things you want, for time and to eternity? And are you looking for the glorious inheritance among the saints in light, only through

the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ? If so, then have you another evidence that your souls prosper and are in health; and I wish above all things that they may continue to prosper and be in health. The Lord, knowing the doubts and fears of his own people, hath given them many tokens for good, whereby they may know that the Lord is theirs, and that they are his; such as an increase of spiritual light and knowledge, and a true relish for duties; such as when our corruptions are weaker and the power of sin more and more subdued in us; as when we find less of an earthly and more of a heavenly disposition: but the bare mention of them must now suffice while we proceed,

Secondly, to mention a few of those means most calculated to promote the prosperity and health of the soul.

The goodness of God hath appointed means of grace, which are like pools of water to quench the thirst of the weary traveller, and help him on his way. Some of these are of a private nature, and some are public. The private means of grace are principally these; viz. the reading of the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer; the public ones are the House of Prayer, the bed of affliction, and this place, which we may call the School of Christ. Of each of these time will

allow me to say but little. And first, as to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, you need not that I should inform you how profitable they are unto all things. Are you ignorant? they will instruct you; are you led out of the way? they will be as a lamp to your feet; are you sorrowing after a godly sort? they will comfort you; are you tempted? they will point out a way to escape; if you are afflicted, you will there find prayers suited to your case; and if you are cheerful, there are the sweet psalms of the singer of Israel. But why need I multiply words to prove what you know as well as myself, that the Word of God is good, and truly blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it. Beloved, are you in the habit of perusing this blessed volume at home? Can you say that you have not passed a day this month, or this year, without searching into these records of life? Go on, then, to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred truths of God's Word, and I doubt not your souls will prosper and be in health. But reading the Scriptures, without meditation, will be like eating without digesting; like sowing the seed without harrowing it; in either case no benefit can be expected. Reflect, then, on what you read. Oh, it is, and I hope *you* know it is, a delightful exercise to walk with God in holy

converse and serious meditation. As we sit in our parlour, or work in the factory; as we walk in the field, or are engaged in our lawful occupation in life, we may sometimes do this; and when the Spirit of God assisteth us, and the love of Jesus is glowing in our hearts, it is heaven begun below. Say, beloved, do you ever thus hold a holy soliloquy with your souls? When perusing the sacred volume, do you ever put to yourself the question of Philip to the eunuch, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Do you ever say unto your souls, How stand matters between God and thee? This conduct, although too much neglected even by professing Christians, I can assure you is very conducive to the prosperity and health of your souls; and, as such, I beseech you, my brethren, to suffer the word of exhortation. Prayer is the breath, the very life of the soul. How knew Ananias that Saul of Tarsus was a converted man?—behold he prayeth! and therefore a man can as well live without breathing as a Christian without praying; and beside this, some of you have lately heard how Jesus spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; nor is it less our privilege than our duty. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift, and will give to whom he will; but it is written, that he will be

inquired of, to do these things for us. The prayer of faith hath done wonders; it has stayed the sun and the moon in their courses, it has stopped the mouths of lions, it has quenched the flaming fire, it has raised the dead; and, more than all, many a time has it saved a soul alive. Beloved, does our Father, who is in heaven, see you in secret, night and morning, pouring out your soul unto him in earnest prayer? Does *He*, from whom no secrets are hid, hear the silent supplications of your soul as you lie on your beds in the silent watches of the night, when His beloved sleep has fled from your eyes, when through pain or disappointment you can find no comfort in the creation? Can you find it in telling your complaints unto Him, who never yet turned away His face from the destitute nor took His mercy from them? Oh! pray unto God, ye people, and let the voice of your supplication be heard; cry mightily in Jesus' name, and while you pray, your gracious intercessor and advocate will plead with you and for you unto God, His Father and yours, that a blessing may descend, and then your souls shall prosper and be in health. But there are public means of grace, unto which you will do well to attend. The first is the house of prayer; there how often does the Christian find in his own experience more legibly than if engraved on the walls, that

it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of Heaven to his soul; there God dwelleth in very deed among his people, and there the voice of joy and thanksgiving is to be heard, arising at once from a thousand hearts and tongues; there the rebellious sinner is stayed in his mad career, there the mourner is comforted, and there all who seek the Lord shall surely find Him. I need not exhort you to attend more constantly than you do; but one thing bear in mind, that it is written, "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all people;" those are mistaken, therefore, I presume, who care not to join in the prayers and praises of the church, but who are content if they can hear the sermon, and they defeat the end of their going to hear, if they pray not first for a blessing; rather be found waiting at the posts of God's house, than suffer the Lord to wait for you; so may you expect your souls to prosper and be in health. At the bed of languishing you may learn many a useful lesson, which will amply repay you for the time or property you bestow; you will learn to be thankful for the situation in which Porvidence has placed you, while you behold the pain and poverty of your neighbours; and in the rich man's chamber also you may sometimes see in what peace a Christian can die. You will

learn what it is to trust in God when earthly comforts fail; in short, if you, with an humble mind, go, desiring to do good, and get good, you will find that Solomon's words are verified in your experience; viz., "That it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of noisy mirth and feasting;" and while you visit the afflicted and the destitute, your own soul shall prosper and be in health. One other means of promoting soul prosperity remains to be noticed; viz., that work in which we have been unitedly engaged—teaching the children of the poor to read and understand the word of God; and permit me to say, I cannot conceive it possible for a Sunday-school teacher to seriously attend and not derive advantage to his own soul; every department of this work seems so calculated to stir up the gift of God within us, and to increase our grace, so that our duty becomes our privilege; for I can confidently appeal to your experience, but I will in one instance only. Have not your minds been enlarged, and have you not beheld a beauty in the Scriptures, unknown to you before, while you have been instructing the dear children? Many are the advantages of a serious Sunday-school teacher, on which I should be glad to dwell, but must not; time allows me only to press upon your attention the

absolute necessity of still using these six means of grace; viz. reading the Holy Scriptures, divine meditation and secret prayer, the public worship of God, the bed of affliction and the Sunday-school; which means, if you diligently and humbly use, it cannot fail but your soul will prosper and be in health. We proceed, thirdly, to consider the apostle's earnest wish for the prosperity and health of his beloved Gaius, as leading us to inculcate and encourage an affectionate spirit towards each other and the whole family of God. Let us mark the expression; it is not a cold, formal compliment, but proceeding from a heart warmed with a sense of the Saviour's love, and anxiously desirous that the disciple should be a partaker of the like benefit. "Beloved," says he, "I wish, above all things—your welfare lies near my heart, my soul is bound up in yours, and I could almost wish myself accursed if that could save you; yea, it is my earnest desire, and shall be my constant prayer, that thou mayest prosper and be in health." And what should hinder, Sir, but this same love should abound more and more amongst us now? And here I cannot but bless that God who maketh men of one house to be of the same mind, that during the four years I have been teacher in this place, the enemy of our peace, whose device is "Divide and conquer,"

hath not been permitted to cause any root of bitterness to spring up, but the Lord hath given us the blessing of peace. Thus have I endeavoured to shew you some of the evidences of soul prosperity, to point out some means to attain it, and to hold forth the loving and affectionate spirit of the beloved disciple of Jesus for your imitation;—and oh! may it be our wish, above all things, to prosper in *our* souls, and be in health, and then I am sure it will be our desire that others may too. It now only remains for me, beloved, in a few words, to bid you farewell. Since it has pleased God to call me to a saving knowledge of himself, it has been a fixed axiom with me, that, in whatever situation I was placed, therein to abide until the same hand that placed me there beckoned me away. The Providence of God, as it appears to me and others, now calls me hence; and, if so, it is my duty not to confer with flesh and blood, but calmly to submit; else, judge ye, my brethren, if it is a small trial to leave my father's house, where I was born, and under whose kind care I have been trained up in wisdom's ways; to leave that pastor under whose ministry I was turned unto God, and from whom I have ever since received most wholesome counsel whenever I asked his advice; to quit that congregation of

faithful people with whom, for more than five years past, I have sat down at the table of our Lord; nor is it with less regret that I leave you, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, from whom I have always received the most affectionate proofs of Christian regard; and it was on this account I desired, before I left, to have this opportunity, in return, to testify to each of you, with sincerity, that I wish, above all things, "that thou mayest prosper and be in health." Brethren, the time is short, and life is uncertain, and therefore I think the parting words of Paul to the elders of Ephesus are applicable to us, when he said, "Now I know that all of you among whom I have been teaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more;" for, should I come here again, it may be told me, our brother is departed; or our sister,—perhaps the youngest, the healthiest, is gone; may each one now say, "Lord, is it I?" Or it may be, my work will be cut short in the earth, and the place which knoweth me now will shortly know me no more for ever. Receive what has been said as my last advice, and let me urge you, as you would wish to meet me again, if not here, yet in glory, to seek the health and prosperity of your souls, and then I know you cannot, you will not, neglect these little ones of whom the Lord, like

Pharaoh's daughter, saith to each of you, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages;" or as, when our Saviour said to Simon, "Lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord," was the reply; then, "Feed my lambs" with the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. Oh, be ye steadfast; see that ye fall not out by the way; strive not for the pre-eminence; but he that would be a chief among you, let him first sit on the lowest form; let the young be modest and humble, and let the aged be tender and patient, and the God of Peace be with you all. Be ye instant, in season and out of season, in instructing the dear children. I exhort you all, as far as circumstances will admit, to be constant in your attendance, and always in time. Example goes further than precept; if two duties clash in point of time, you must see which is the greater, and give that most attention. Cultivate a spirit of love towards the dear babes; look on them as the purchase of Christ, and then consider what they cost him; what tears, what groans, what weighty sufferings he endured for them; and then you will count your time and labour as nothing. Never forget to tell the youngest child he is a sinner by nature and in practice, and, as such, liable to everlasting punishment; tell him, however, there is mercy to be had

through the blood of Jesus Christ; but tell him also, that he must seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; and then, when he has found him, to cleave unto the Lord as long as he lives, so shall their souls prosper and be in health. But, I beseech you always to bear in mind that you are not sufficient for these things of yourselves; therefore, call upon God continually to bless your endeavours, and let me entreat you, my brethren, to continue your prayer-meetings; they will still prove, as I believe they have done, a bond of union, and will not fail to bring down a blessing on your handiwork. I must now bid you farewell; to some it may be a long farewell, if the next time you and I meet shall be at the judgment-seat of Christ. Accept, then, this my last tribute of love, and believe me when I say to each of you: "Beloved, I wish, above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health."

THE OLD YEAR'S NIGHT OF 1820, AND THE NEW YEAR'S MORN OF 1821.

WRITTEN AT THE ABOVE SEASONS.

Retrospect,
Hitherto the Lord hath helped me!
and Prospect.
O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity!

Eternal God! whose mighty power
Hath brought me through another year,
Thou hast been my strong rock and tower,
Wherein I have been kept from fear.

Accept the grateful thanks I bring,
For all thy mercies, and thy care;
To Thee in hymns of praise I'll sing,
Since of thy love I richly share.

Were I to tell thy mercies, Lord,
Or say how gracious thou hast proved,
The time would fail me to record
How thou hast me, a sinner, loved.

Thou, gracious Saviour! thou alone,
How sinful I have been canst tell;
This year I have thy mercy known,
In saving me from death and hell.

Oh, wondrous grace! oh, matchless love!
That spared a sinner vile as I;
Thy pardoning love I richly prove,
And thy kind help is ever nigh.

Thy bounty fed me, and thy hand
Led me from every evil way;
My fears dispersed at thy command,
And thou hast blest me to this day.

The Lord hath kept me to this hour—
My Ebenezer here I raise;
I'll trust thy faithfulness and power,
And to the end thy goodness praise.

Prospect.

What mean those merry peals I hear
From Magdalen's* majestic tower?—
The bells proclaim another year
To man is usher'd, with this hour.

And am I spared, my blessed Lord?—
Nor am I yet cast down in sin!
It is because of thy kind word,
Thou hast my Intercessor been.

Indulgent Lord! I humbly pray
That thou wouldst pour on me thy grace,
And by thy Spirit all the way
Guide me until I see thy face.

If thou wilt lead me by thy hand,
And gently turn me when I stray,
Then shall I reach that blissful land
Where years can never roll away.

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* Oxford.

Thy Providence I ask, to guide
  My doubtful footsteps through the year;
Be Thou my God, whate'er betide,
  And let me thy protection share.

Thy grace I seek, that I may be
  Preserved from Satan, self, and sin.
Oh, may I ever look to Thee
  For aid, who hast my succour been.

My Saviour, whilst my mortal state
  Thou dost preserve, to thee I'd live;
But if to die be soon my fate,
  To share thy glory I would strive.

Thus I'm prepared to live or die,
  Since thou, my blessed Lord, art near;
I soon shall dwell in joys on high,
  And with thee live an endless year.

Letter from a Clergyman of the Established Church to Mrs. Bridgman.

My dear Mrs. Bridgman,

I ENCLOSE a letter which I received, *twenty-five years ago*, from Mr. Bridgman, just after he was ordained. I have read it with peculiar pleasure. You will see what he did the first time he opened his mouth in Trinity Church, Forest of Dean; how appropriate the text; how God appeared to be with him; and how he exhorted sinners to repent and believe the Gospel.

Yours, &c.,

Wandsworth, July 16, 1846. E. W.

Near Trinity Church,
Forest of Dean, Gloucester,
April 18, 1821.

My dear Friend,

AN opportunity presenting itself, I embrace it with pleasure, to let you know of my welfare. You have heard, I presume, that I had

commenced my ministry, and that, blessed be God, under favourable auspices, I have a pleasant and healthy country, a large commodious church, a crowded and attentive congregation, and several instances of success, and the presence and blessing of God, in my own soul, and on my labours; for all these good things I wish not to be proud, but desire to be thankful. From the first I took *my Bible*, and *my Bible only*, into the pulpit, although I was strongly recommended by several to take large notes; and so kind was my Master, whom I wished to serve *better* by this practice, that I did not hesitate in my whole sermon, nor did my memory fail me; and instead of being daunted at the appearance of a large assembly, I was encouraged the more to declare to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have the cross erected on several prominent parts of the church. God forbid that the pulpit should be the only place where it is not raised. I seldom preach the terrors of the Lord; or if I do, in each sermon, it is but briefly. I find that a warm and faithful representation of a Saviour's love and pity to poor sinners will much sooner humble them, and it makes me weep tears of joy to behold as I do, every Sunday, the big tear rolling down, or wiped from off the cheek, whilst I am telling them of the tender love and mercy of the great

Redeemer; nor, so far as I can discern, are their affections merely excited by a pathetic recital, to which I make no pretension; but the plain tale of Christ crucified for poor lost sinners reaches their hearts, and tears of gratitude and love testify they not only hear attentively, but believe; and not only believe, but feel deeply interested in a truth so momentous. Hence I am determined, God being my helper, to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Salvation by Him was my first, and I wish it to be my perpetual, theme. I began my first sermon with a verse of Dr. Watts, "Salvation! oh! the joyful sound," and it proved so to some on that occasion. My first text was, "Unto you is the word of this salvation sent." After the exordium, I shewed—First, their need of salvation; secondly, the nature of it; thirdly, the author of it; and, lastly, addressed the penitent and the returning prodigal, the confirmed Christian, the aged and the young, and to each I said, as a messenger from God, and as his ambassador, "To *you* is the word of this salvation sent;" but to you, careless sinner, I have no pleasing message. Turn ye from your evil ways, humble yourselves before the Almighty, and seek for pardon through the blood of his Son, and then it will be my pleasing province to say, "to you also is the word of this

salvation sent." This is a very brief and imperfect epitome of my first sermon. It was delivered in weakness, and though not with much, with some trembling; but the power and blessing of my Master accompanied it, and some of the people were turned to the Lord. I attend the Sabbath-school about an hour before each service, alternately morning and afternoon. Last Sunday evening I was not *field*-preaching, but I was *garden* and *road-side* preaching; three rooms opening to each other were crammed, and as the window was opened near where I stood, the people in the garden, fronting the house, could hear me; and how it did delight me to see them stand with open ears and mouths, and I trust hearts too, to receive the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls. It was grateful to my feelings, yet required great grace to keep me humble, to be met on the road a mile before I reached the place, and an hour before service, by several wishing to be further instructed in the things belonging to their eternal peace; and, on my return, although, being heated by the crowd and the exertion, I stayed some time, yet several waited to tell me, in their plain way, that they began to see the necessity and loveliness of religion. Oh! that these assurances of usefulness may not be as the early cloud and the morning

dew, but may they be strong and abiding. We have four, and next week shall have five, evening lectures, besides one at the church, which Mr. B. and myself alternately take. We also meet the children of the forest school, and of Hope Mansel, two evenings in the week; and from ten till four every day, Saturday excepted, I pay pastoral visits to the sick, the aged, and infirm, who from distance cannot attend the public means; and we call on others who will not, but whom by persuasion we hope to allure. The only time I can depend on for study is an hour after tea—which, as it is late, is our last meal—and before breakfast; however, I thank God that hitherto I have always been prepared with more than I have had time to say it in. A text strikes my mind with some force,—I write down two or three main divisions, and then preach it over in the forest; for, though the population is large, they lie scattered in small hamlets at a considerable distance from each other.

Thus, my dear friend, I have at length attained the highest summit of my earthly wishes; namely, a constant habitation in the house of the Lord. I may well say, with Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work," and I feel—oh! that I may always feel—my need of great grace to do it rightly; I exceedingly require it at this time. The people

are affectionately devoted to a faithful ministry, and some of them have expressed themselves in such a way, that I have felt it my duty to say, "Do not, I beseech you, speak well of your minister to his face;" "*pray for him*, but do *not praise him*." I was taught, the day after my ordination, that popularity would be dangerous to me. A fellow-candidate went with me to the top of Gloucester Cathedral—it is very lofty—and whilst he could stand firm without holding, and could even put his head between the balustrades, I was so dizzy that if I had not held by an iron, I must have fallen. "Oh! Lord!" I cried, "make me and keep me humble," for

> "He that is down needs fear no fall—
> He that is low, no pride;
> He that is humble ever shall
> Have God to be his guide."

We have very respectable society, respectable because truly devoted to God, as well as in comfortable circumstances. Though a stranger, I have met with the greatest cordiality and kindness, and judge that I have every reason to be truly thankful to God for sending me here. The fields are white to harvest, and if I work whilst it is called to-day, many may be gathered into the Heavenly Garner. In attaining the end, I shall suffer pain, but, with divine assistance, shall count

it, in this work, sweet to live and sweet to die. I pay particular attention to the young, and personally, and at suitable length, address them from the pulpit. There is an article on this head in the *Teachers' Magazine* of the present month, which decidedly meets my views; it states, that if children and young persons compose one-sixth (he might have said one-fourth) of our congregations, if they have immortal souls, they should claim a proportionable share of our addresses from the pulpit; for it must be acknowledged that by far the greater part of sermons are not adapted to the capacity of young persons, and besides, through the craft of Satan, young people imagine that sermons, as well as religion in general, belong to their parents, and to older people, and so arises a listlessness and indifference, and inattention to the subject, even if they could comprehend it, when attended to; but if they are personally addressed with a "Now, my dear children, I have something to say to you," they open their eyes and listen, wondering what the preacher has to say to them; they hear,—"faith comes by hearing," and since I have been here, I have found that to speak to the children is a very likely method to interest the parents; they are pleased with the notice taken of their children, and if the counsel be lost upon them, perhaps the

parents receive it themselves. Indeed this has been the case already; the arrow which I aimed at the young, without totally missing them, has reached the hearts of others. Last Sunday morning, for instance, in preaching from "Fear not, little flock," I was telling the children how kind our dear Shepherd is ever to the lambs of his fold, and when I had done, two persons came and told me how much they had been comforted and strengthened in their souls, by that part of the sermon. One of them had come *seven* miles, and had intended to have gone elsewhere; but the Providence of God directed her to the forest church, and gave her that comfort and joy, which she said she had long sought in vain. Another person (I was informed by his wife), who had led a very careless and dissolute life, and who had often heard the terrors of the Lord with unconcern, and even with a kind of daring opposition, went home after the above discourse, *gentle as a lamb, weeping contrite tears of godly sorrow*, that he had been so ungrateful and rebellious to his Heavenly Shepherd, whose tender love and compassion he had heard set forth before him. I am very thankful for these and several particular instances of God's favour to this people. Indeed there seems to be a general—oh! that it may be a lasting—interest excited in their souls about salvation. The

apparent thirst for hearing the word of God, and he profound attention paid, are such as I never witnessed. I augur good from this, because where there is a desire for grace excited, I hope, I believe, that that desire will be satisfied. You will excuse the egotism of this letter, but it was unavoidable, unless I had written on foreign subjects.

Your affectionate friend and

Brother in Christ,

ISAAC BRIDGMAN.

Written at the commencement of his Ministry.

ON A CASE USED AS A COVER TO A PULPIT BIBLE.

Oh, favoured Bible case! thou dost enclose
In thy dark covers truths no angel knows;
Truth without error mingled dwells in thee,
Its author God, and Heaven its end will be.

Oh, that the preacher that presumes to use
This blessed book may never dare refuse
With boldness to proclaim each sacred truth
Contained within, designed for age and youth.

Great Teacher of thy people, condescend
Thy sacred influence on me to send,
That when in thy blest house I shall proclaim,
To rich and poor, the honour of thy name,

No fear of man—no hope of his applause,
May ever make me shame to own thy cause.
Lord, what is man! that I should fear his frown,
Or court his favour, whilst I thee disown?

No, no! my Lord, if thou thy grace wilt give,
Thy truth alone I'll publish whilst I live;—
Jesus, the theme of this blest book, I'll tell,
Can save lost sinners from the lowest hell.

His blood can cleanse from sins of deepest dye,
His grace can bring to God poor wanderers nigh ;
His righteousness can claim for all his own
A full salvation, an eternal throne.

Almighty God ! thy blessing I invoke,
Whilst I thy name exalt from thy blest book ;
Let me a heartfelt Gospel ever teach,—
A Saviour, known and loved, for ever preach.

My gracious Lord ! I earnestly implore,
Thou wouldst on my weak efforts blessings pour ;
Give me, my God, some precious souls for hire,
Nor more, nor less, can I from thee desire.

PRAYER FOR MINISTERIAL SUCCESS.

My Father, and my Lord,
  Once more thy suppliant hear ;
From Heaven, thy glorious seat, toward
  Thy footstool bow thine ear !

Ere I ascend that Throne
  Which thou in Heaven hast placed
For me, unworthy, through thy Son,
  I humbly seek thy grace.

I have a boon to crave,
  That thou alone canst give ;
Deny me not, and thou shalt have
  My praises whilst I live.

On me, I trust, thou hast
  Pardon bestowed and peace;
And though not worthy, made to taste
  Of thy redeeming grace.

And now my soul inquires,
  What shall I do, my Lord?
With trembling hope, my heart aspires
  To preach thy holy Word.

This motive of my mind,
  Which long has me impelled,
I fain would hope, dear Lord, is thine,
  And been by thee upheld.

Yet still I greatly fear
  To speak "Thus saith the Lord!"
Except thy presence shall be near,
    All needful help to afford.

This is the boon I seek,
  With this thy servant bless,
That I thy sacred word may speak
  With wisdom and success.

SHORT SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

HOPE MANSELL CHURCH, Sunday afternoon, April, 1821. —Matthew xxii., part of v. 42.—"What think you of Christ?"

The query is momentous,—

The Saviour asks it,—

Your salvation depends on the reply.

First. What do you think of his person?

He is the blessed God;—

He became feeble man.

This union of two natures was necessary; for if he had not been God, divine justice could not have been satisfied with the sacrifice; if he had not been man, he could not have made it; for as God he could not bleed or die. No man, no angel, could redeem poor sinners; Christ only, the Son of God, could; and thus mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other.

What do you think of him as the man of sorrows?

As man he suffered poverty, weariness, perse-

cution, temptation, death itself, that he might be able to deliver his people from them all.

What do you think of him as your mediator and intercessor with the Father?

He is both able and willing to save us.

Able, because he is God, because he hath satisfied divine justice, because he cannot plead in vain.

His willingness is evident, in that he came down from Heaven to die for us, and is gone to Heaven to live for us.

What do you think of him as the judge of all men?

Ye who love him delight to contemplate him in that character. You are sinners, but Christ died; you have broken the law, but he fulfilled it; you deserve God's anger, but he bore it for you; and who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? None! Christ is your friend, and can be a just God, and yet your Saviour.

Careless sinner, what do you think of Christ? Perhaps harshly; perhaps not at all: like Gallio, you care for none of these things; you worship him not as God, you trust not in his merits as Mediator, you value not his salvation, and you cannot (dying such) share his glory. Yet *you* must see him, and see him as your judge; *you* must hear him, and then you must obey his

awful mandate, "Depart, ye cursed!"—Oh! stop, poor sinner!

Penitent sinner, you are afraid to think of Christ, yet you need not; he thinks of you with compassion, and you should think that he is both willing and able to save you. Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you think of Christ, and that truly; as the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely; as God you adore him, as man you love him, as Mediator you delight in him, and as your judge you hail him with joyful anticipation. May you ever thus think of him, until you see him as he is, and be for ever with him.

TRINITY CHURCH, Good Friday afternoon, April, 1821.—Lamentations i., v. 12: "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

We meet to lament the sufferings and death of a dear departed friend—our best friend—Jesus Christ, the Lord. Behold his birth! his life! his death! and see if there ever was sorrow like unto his!

First. His birth,—not in a palace, but a stable, —laid not in a splendid cradle, but in a manger, —no room for him in the inn.

Second. Behold, his life was passed in poverty,

—no place to lay his head! no money to pay the tribute! He hungered, he thirsted, he was faint and weary!

His persecution from Herod; the Jews intending to cast him down a precipice; their false accusation.

His temptation,—in the wilderness,—trials from the people, and by his own disciples,—from the opposition and contradiction of sinners.

Third. Behold his death, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow; see him in the garden, in the near prospect of death. Hark how he groans! hear how he prays! behold his submission!

At the tribunal, they mocked him! spit on him! buffeted him! falsely accused him! tormented him! and, though innocent, condemned him!

See him on the cross; he could not carry it; they nailed him to it; they gave him vinegar mingled with gall; they pierced him! they derided him! In agony, he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He bore the fierce anger of Almighty God, and drank to the very dregs the cup of trembling. "Was there ever sorrow like to his sorrow?"

Second. The appeal of the Saviour, "All ye that pass by, is it nothing to you?" It is every thing!

It is pardon, peace, and salvation! Oh! that you may know it to be so in your own experience, ye thoughtless sinners! Is it nothing to you? Alas! you seem to think so; yet, be assured that Christ was not born—did not suffer—died not in vain for you; for if his sufferings save you not, they will plunge you deeper in perdition!

Ye poor, despised, afflicted people, is it nothing to you? Oh, yes! You taste but a drop of the cup; he drank it to the dregs.

Ye broken-hearted sinners, is it nothing to you? Yes; through his sufferings, your sorrows shall be turned to joy, and your tears into gladness of heart.

Ye who love the Lord, is it nothing to you? Yes; you glory in the cross; you delight in the Saviour; you wish to be like him; you long to be with him!

Ye young,—ye healthy,—ye aged,—is it nothing to you? It should be the chief subject of your thought in youth, your care in manhood and health, and your comfort in old age.

TRINITY CHURCH, Easter Sunday morning, April, 1821.—Matthew xxviii., v. 5 & 6: "And the angel said, he is not here, for he is risen, as he said," &c.

We met on Friday to lament the death of a dear, the dearest, friend; but to-day we rejoice

in his resurrection; and though he was dead, he is alive again; he is not here, but he is risen.

First. The congratulation of the angels. I know that you seek Jesus. Oh! that we could say so of all of you,—bless God, we can say so of many. Ye seek Jesus, and why? He is the chief object of your love; he deserves to be so; he is great and gracious; he is found of all who seek him!

You seek him in his providences,—his word, his house, at his table.

Ye seek Jesus who was crucified; no other Saviour will suit; his cross is the way to the crown; by his death you expect life.

The angels' message.—He is risen! Death could not hold him! the grave could not keep him! Hell could not bind him! He raised himself. "I lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." "Destroy this temple (my body), and I will raise it in three days."

There are many witnesses to his resurrection,—God—men—angels.

The invitation of the angels.—Come and see,—not where he lies, but where he did lie. Mahomet and other impostors died, and remain dead; Jesus died, but ever lives!

The resurrection of Christ proves—First, The truth of Christianity.

If Jesus had continued dead, we could not have been certain that he was a divine person, or that his religion was divine; but his resurrection proves both.

It shews that His sacrifice was accepted.

He was raised for our justification—that is, to accomplish our salvation.

His resurrection is a pledge of our own; He is the elder brother, and gone to insure a place for us in Heaven,—that where He is, we, who believe on Him, may be also.

Reflection First.—If Christ died for us, let us die to sin, both of flesh and of spirit.

Second.—If we be risen with Christ, let us set our affections on things above. Jesus, our treasure, is there; let our hearts be there also.

Third.—Since Christ has risen, we are called on to rejoice with *holy*, not with *carnal*, mirth. Alas! Satan has turned our holy days into holidays, and made that which was a blessing to prove a curse unto us.

"Fear not ye," said the angel; fear not. Ye have come to seek, and ye shall find the Saviour; He is not here, in the grave, but He is *here, in this house of prayer*, and all ye His people shall find Him *here, in your hearts.*

Ye also who fear death, fear it not; it had not power over your Saviour, it shall not have power

over you; He died the death, He became the death of death,—that you, His people, might never *die*, but only *sleep* in Jesus.

Ye also who long for his appearing, wait awhile, a little while, and fear not; but, as the angel said to the astonished disciples, He, who is now gone into Heaven, and is there, ever making intercession for you, shall come again in the clouds of Heaven, and take you to himself, and so shall you be for ever with the Lord whom you love.

Penitent sinners and returning backsliders, fear not ye, for He who had power over the grave, death, and hell, and burst their barriers, has power to forgive your sins, and to save your souls, and to take you to Heaven.

Thoughtless immortals! careless sinners! You are perhaps designing to rejoice this Easter in worldly *sinful* mirth; but happy would it have been for you if the Saviour had not risen, for then you would have had no Judge; but now the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised, and you *may* be lost; yea you *will* be lost for ever if you seek not the Saviour now. *Resurgam* is a dreadful word, whether on the escutcheon of the rich or the poor. It means, I shall rise again. Rise again to what? To see a judge that is not your friend! to a tribunal where

you must plead guilty to every charge! to a condemnation dreadful to be heard! and to an awful doom you cannot escape! Fly, then, to the Saviour, and make Him your Friend! fly speedily; look to Him, a once crucified, but now risen Saviour; and fear not ye,—you shall be saved.

TRINITY CHURCH, Sunday afternoon, April 29, 1821.—Joshua xxiv., v. 15: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," &c.

That class of persons I wish chiefly to address consists of those who have not yet made up their minds for God and for religion. They are amiable, kind, benevolent, and of good moral character; but they have not, with Mary, made choice of that good portion which shall not be taken from them.

I shall first shew you the impossibility of serving God and Satan. Their commands are clearly contrary,—whatever the Almighty commands, Satan would prohibit; and whatever God prohibits, to that Satan allures and entices. If God requires the heart in his House of Prayer, Satan, in the Playhouse.—God, in his Word, Satan, in his cards.—God, in his praises, Satan, in his dances and profane songs.

In God's service there is true pleasure; His

ways are pleasantness, the end peace. In Satan's service there is slavery, toil in the pursuit, and disappointment in the possession.

God's service is pure and heavenly; it enlightens the judgment, it corrects the will, it directs the affections towards right objects.

Satan's service is sensual and earthly; it darkens the understanding, it warps the will, and draws the affections aside from their proper objects.

God's service is profitable to body and soul; it promotes diligence, sobriety, and contentment, and promises a peaceful death! a joyful resurrection! a blissful eternity!—thus hath it the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

The danger of delay.—Choose ye *this* day whom ye will serve. How long halt ye between two opinions?

First. To young people—how long halt ye? &c. Until you are old? You may not live! or you may not have your senses continued,—or you may not have grace given.

Second. Ye aged people—how long halt ye? Too long already have ye halted,—choose ye *this* day whom ye will serve, or very soon it may be said of you—the summer is past, the harvest is ended, and you are not saved!

Third. Ye gay and healthy people, who think that your mountain stands strong—how long halt ye? Your gaiety and health may be soon lost. Oh! devote your health and strength to God!

Fourth. Poor and afflicted people—how long halt ye? So long as ye halt, so long will you be unhappy here; and not deciding, you will be miserable for ever!

Fifth. Ye rich—how long halt ye? Oh! be not like the rich man in the Gospel, adding house to house, and land to land, and not laying up treasure for yourselves in Heaven. Halt no longer, but be decided for God and for your souls—be content to lose your worldly all, rather than by keeping *all*, to lose your *precious* and never-dying souls!

I shall now enforce the text by setting before you some of the consequences of serving Christ in the world.

If you serve the world, you may perhaps have a little noisy pleasure or worldly gain, but at most for a short season only, and then will succeed:

Bitter reflection on the past;

Dreadful foreboding of the future;

And an awfully tremendous eternity.

But, if you serve the Lord Christ, you will indeed have tribulation here, but on the whole you shall enjoy:—

A peaceful life;
A triumphant death;
A glorious eternity.

Thus have I set before you both services, and their consequences: choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Oh! sinner, make the choice in this temple! make it in this house! pass not yon gate before you make it, lest the next gate you enter be that of death! death eternal! And whilst you are reflecting what choice you will make, I will *pause* in solemn silence—not so—but in *earnest supplication*, I will pour out my soul to God; and my beloved friends, ye who love and serve the Lord will join with me in prayer, that you may make a wise choice. Now let every knee be bowed—every face covered—every head serious, whilst you make the important decision; and may the God of Heaven help you to decide aright: I pause for your reply!

And now, what answer shall I return to Him that sent me?—I expect a threefold reply:

First. The determination of some to continue in the service of Satan, and that at a risk—risk, did I say?—no, Sirs, not a risk, but a certainty of everlasting damnation. Gabriel! blessed angel, didst thou hear the answer? Hast thou borne it to the throne of God? and is the Almighty not about to hurl his hottest thunder-

bolt against such rebellious sinners? Oh! thou God of mercy! stay thy hand! and yet, and yet, forbear the blow! Father, spare them! spare them yet! Oh! Sirs, I have pleaded for you, but I dare not pledge that my prayer is heard. Abraham pleaded for Sodom, yet Sodom perished, —and so may you. From my very soul I pity you; if prayers would save you, I have poured them out on your behalf, and will again; if tears would save you, they have been shed for you; and if my heart's blood would redeem you, willingly would I shed it here, and save your precious souls;—but if you choose not to serve Christ, then Christ has died in vain for you! Grace leads the right way; if you choose the wrong, you must take it and perish! Sinners,— perverse, rebellious sinners,—I shall meet you at the judgment-seat of Christ!

Second. From others I expect a different reply, yet scarcely less awful: you say, that although you have considered, you cannot yet determine— you must still hesitate—must still halt between two opinions; you wish indeed to be saved from hell, and to obtain heaven; but some of you cannot leave the pleasures of the world—for they are dear to you as a right hand or a right eye— others cannot quit its cares. But, Sirs, I tell you, in God's name, you must sooner or later quit

your *sinful* worldly pursuits, or you must be lost for ever. Oh! ye blessed and holy angels, who hover round this assembly, I dare appeal to you, —must they not? In all the thousand years that ye have stood before the glorious throne of God, did you ever see a soul approach that pure and blissful seat clogged with the sinful pursuits and pleasures of this world? No, ye never did! no *unclean* thing can enter there; and if, Sirs, you die with hearts *unchanged*, you are lost! lost! lost for ever! But hark! hear you not the angelic host attuning their golden harps before the throne of God? Behold then, Sirs, and mark the subject of their song! What are the glorious tidings that have reached those heavenly choirs? Is some new world ushered into existence, and do the morning stars again shout for joy at an event so glorious? Oh! no! a sinner is born to God in this assembly! and some *one** (or *more*) who has hitherto lived only to himself has now determined to serve the living God! and you would tell me, my brother or my sister, if you might,—Oh! Sir, I will this day, this very moment, choose to serve God, only, wholly, and for ever! My brother or sister, I hail thee! It is

* We know one now living who was born of God under this sermon, and from the known usefulness of the Minister, it is likely there were others also.

for thee the blessed seraphs are chanting their songs of triumph; it is because thou, lately a sinner, far from God, art now returning to him. Oh! happy soul—oh! happy choice. Eternal Jehovah! from thy glorious seat above confirm this choice, which has now been made; strengthen the resolution which is now commenced, and let the work of grace which thou hast now begun be completed in eternity; and may those souls which have now made thee their supreme choice prove by a life of holiness that thou hast chosen them.

TRINITY CHURCH, Sunday morning, May 6.—1 Samuel ii., v. 30: "Them that honour me I will honour."

The connection of the text teaches us the importance and necessity of restraining, even by authority, those under our influence from open sin.

First. The Eternal God is worthy of honour—He is our Creator—our Preserver—our Father, and he will be our Judge.

Inquire who they are that honour God.

They who believe in him.

In his existence—in his attributes—in his Son—in his messages, both of mercy and of justice.

They who trust in Him—in His Providence to guide and defend, and provide for them in this

life, and on the freeness and fulness of His salvation.

They who worship Him in spirit and in truth—in private—in public, and in all His ordinances.

They who bear, with patience and submission, the cross that is laid on them, and who drink the cup their Heavenly Father gives them.

They who gratefully acknowledge every mercy as undeserved, and as received from God.

They who endeavour to promote His glory.

They who have respect to all His commands.

What is the honour that God bestows upon His people?

He honours them with His grace. It is a great honour for a beggar to be set among princes—it is a far greater honour to be put among God's people: we were once among the rubbish of nature, but now among the jewels of God.

God honours them with glorious titles, I believe (more than 120). You would feel honoured in being called lords and ladies, dukes and duchesses; but we who honour God, are honoured with more glorious titles—Sons and Daughters of God—Beloved of God—Blessed—Citizens of Heaven—Family of God—Friends of God—Heirs of God—Jewels of the Lord—Peculiar Treasure of God.

He honours them with His peculiar protection here—He exercises indeed a general providence

over all—He governs all—He restrains all; but His saints are His peculiar care; He knoweth the way they take—He guides them with his eye—He provides for all their wants—He supplies them with needful grace and strength—He never leaves them nor forsakes them.

He honours them by giving them victory over all their enemies; no weapon formed against them can prosper; they are not merely, but *more* than conquerors, through Him that hath loved them, over the world, sin, temptation, Satan, and death itself.

He honours them with manifestations of His presence; and lastly, He will honour them by owning them for his jewels at the last day, and "they shall be mine in that day," saith He, "when I make up my jewels;" and "whosoever confesses me before men, him will I confess before my Father."

Such honour have all God's people; but, oh, sinner! hear what the Almighty says of you! "Those that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." You have heard what it is to honour God, and by this you know what it is to despise Him; and if you despise Him, you shall be lightly esteemed in life, in death, and in the day of judgment. Oh! Seek to have God here, that He may honour you for ever!

TRINITY CHURCH, Sunday afternoon, May 13.—Isaiah lvii., v. 15: "Eternity!"

Eternal God, how can a creature of a moment speak as he ought of that tremendously awful, that delightfully cheerful sound—Eternity?

Oh! for an angel's mind to conceive—for an angel's tongue to express—the infinitely important realities of eternity!!! Eternal Spirit! humbly, yet earnestly, I invoke thy aid whilst I engage in the arduous task of preaching to these immortals about eternity!

Eternity! Oh! what a vast abyss! Where shall I begin? and when I have begun, where shall I end the delightful theme?

The theme is eternal, and no time is long enough to tell its boundless nature and importance.

What is eternity?

I cannot tell!—No tongue of mortals can express it!—No angel's mind can conceive it!

It is an ocean without a bottom or a shore.

It is a space, whose height, and depth, and length and breadth are infinite. It is a line that has no beginning, and has no ending. Add all the leaves of the trees to the blades of grass, and all the sands of the sea to the drops of every ocean, and it would not express eternity.

The mind is lost in the search of the extent of

this line, this space, this ocean of eternity, and into the dread eternity into which we are all hastening.

Oh, sinner! careless sinner! thoughtless immortal! the stream of time, more rapid than the headlong waterfall, is plunging you into the gulf of eternity! Oh! that ere you pass the tremendous edge of time, the Almighty Saviour may turn your shattered bark into the smooth haven of his love.

Oh, *believer* in the Lord Jesus! the swift-winged chariot of time is bearing you upward with the most amazing rapidity to the everlasting gates of Heaven, and to the eternal embrace of your beloved Saviour!

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Tween two unbounded seas, I stand,
Secure, insensible;
A point of time—a moment's space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell.

Let us inquire, what is eternity? God is the only proper eternity. He is from everlasting to everlasting. His attributes are everlasting: His Almighty power, His omniscience, His omnipresence, His faithfulness, His truth, and love. Believer, rejoice, for these eternal attributes are all in your favour. Sinner, tremble, for, remaining in that state, they will be all eternally against you.

EBENEZER.

January 1, 1822.

HITHERTO the Lord hath helped me! Bless the Lord, oh! my soul, and forget not all his benefits. I am not only the object of God's sparing mercy, but, I humbly trust, of His richer grace. I thank Him for what He has done; I thank Him more for what He has promised. I bless Him if He has made me a Christian; I bless Him for putting me into the ministry, and cannot be sufficiently thankful to Him for placing me in such a sphere of usefulness, and in one so admirably adapted to my talents and habits of life. God, I thank thee that thou hast enabled me to do what little I have done for thy glory. I little thought that, in the first nine months of my ministry, I should have preached no fewer than three hundred and nineteen sermons. Oh! God, I pray thee, let them not be as water spilled on the ground, but rather as seed cast on good ground, which shall

bring forth fruit to thy glory, and the immortal good of those who heard them. Continue unto me, I pray thee, strength of body and of mind, and that I may rather increase than decrease in the exercise of my ministerial duties; and oh! may I save myself and them that hear me! Amen!

Saturday, Jan. 5, 1822.

Death has already begun his busy work in the new year. On the 1st day, poor Ann N —— took her flight to another and a better world; she had been long afflicted, but, I trust, long waiting for her great change, which at last she has found, I doubt not, to her exceeding joy.

Yesterday, a poor lad, of 12 years of age, fell down a pit opposite my residence, and is dreadfully and fatally bruised. I have been called suddenly this afternoon to witness this sad scene, and to pray for him, who, perhaps, when in health, never prayed for himself. I hope that God will give him true repentance and save his soul.

The duties of this week have been delightful to my own soul, and I hope not without advantage to others. I am privileged sometimes to hear of particular instances of usefulness; but when I do not, I must be thankful for general ones. The

blessed Lord make me more diligent and more successful.

Poor George C—— died yesterday morning. I saw him several times, but he was never sufficiently well to answer any questions. I trust, however, that he shewed some sign, and I hope that God has forgiven him.

Yesterday, I read prayers for Dr. ——; he is an able minister of the New Testament, and I hope that God will abundantly bless his labours. My sermons in the latter part of the day were delivered with comfort to myself, and were heard with attention by my auditory; but these are not sufficient. Oh! my God, may nothing ever suffice but thy presence and thy blessing, for thy approbation can prosper even my labours; and now, oh Lord, I beseech thee send prosperity!

Monday, Jan. 21, 1822.

On this day I went to see a poor dying woman, who acknowledges that the words I had once mentioned in a sermon, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," were greatly blessed to her. I thankfully received this as an additional stimulus for me to proceed in the path of duty. The poor woman died on Saturday, and

I believe, with an humble trust in the merits of the great Redeemer.

On Wednesday I took my leave of the house—not the people—at Lydbrook, where I had delivered seventy sermons; my parting text was, "Hitherto, the Lord hath helped us."

On Thursday I commenced a course of lectures on the Revelations—at least, the three first chapters, which contain those beautiful epistles to the "Seven Churches of Asia." May the spirit of the Most High rest on me, that I be not permitted to darken counsel by words without wisdom, but that I may so plainly perceive the mind of the Spirit, that I may teach the people, not, what is merely curious, but that which is useful.

Saturday.—Spent an evening in a visiting-party, when I neither did good nor received it; I take shame to myself, and determine in future not to misspend my time, but seek to make myself useful in preaching or in paying pastoral visits to the people.

Sunday.—Rev. —— opened —— Chapel in the afternoon, and I preached there at night. The place was full both times, and I pray the Eternal God to make it prove agreeable to my text: "None other than the house of God, and the very gate of Heaven." I found it so to my soul, and

humbly trust that others did likewise; and now my prayer for that, as well as for all my other avocations, is: "Oh! Lord, I beseech thee send prosperity."

Monday, Jan. 28, 1822.

On Monday, I enjoyed more than usual the divine presence and blessing, whilst preaching from the words: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Wednesday.—I went to R——, and by the way saw an instance of divine grace and the power of true religion, in a young woman in dying circumstances; her feelings and expressions were rapturous, and she begged me to preach her funeral sermon from the 12th Isaiah, 2nd verse, at H—— M—— Church: "Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: He also is become my salvation."

Friday.—Went forth for the first time to M—— farm; there was a large assembly present, and I hope that good will be done in the name of the Lord.

Saturday.—Ashamed of being idle when there is work to be done, or of refusing to enter a door when it is opened to me; I therefore went this night to a large room used by the Wesleyan Methodists. I

do not know how to account for it, but at the present my discourses are well received; but I suppose that I am in favour with them, because I preach *to* sinners, and present to them an universal and hearty welcome to come to the Saviour; God grant my constant aim may be, to preach so as to *please* God, and not to *displease* men. I preached in the afternoon at F———. I enjoyed much of the divine presence, but it was chiefly at L——— chapel that I felt so much of the sacred influence of God's Spirit. Whilst riding to L———, I was informed that more than 200 poor children had entered the school that day, and when I reached the chapel, I was delighted to see more than 400 seated on each side the pulpit. It was a delightful sight to view so many who a little time before were destitute—wandering, wretched children, now seated in God's house of prayer, and in a fair way of learning those truths which will make them wise to salvation; I was very much led out to speak to them on this interesting occasion, and I humbly trust that they will continue to be brought together, and very soon learn the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.

Passed the week tolerably happy, but not without some doubts and fears, and not without many failings.

On Wednesday I enjoyed the Divine presence, and blessing, and preached to a very large congregation at chapel.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, were passed, as usual, in the exercise of the various repeated duties of my station. Oh! that the constant and so frequent repetition may not wear off those serious and salutary impressions I ought to have in the exercise of them all.

Yesterday, Sunday, I buried two old servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They rest from their labours, and their works follow them. It is a solemn scene to preach to the living with the dead before us. Oh! that the living may lay it to heart, and prepare to follow them.

Monday, Nov. 11.

Nothing particular has transpired during the last week deserving of notice, except that I was too much affected by an intimation that I must shortly quit my present apartments, which in many and in most respects are very well suited to my situation; but I ought as a Christian, especially as a minister, to quiet myself with the reflection, that it is God who chooses our inheritance for us; and if so, I may well leave it

with Him to provide one for me. He has hitherto provided, and I trust will never leave me, nor forsake me. Oh! that I may never leave nor forsake him.

Monday, Feb. 18.

The most weighty matter on my mind this week, was the sight of poor Edward H——, a young man of solid piety and respectable attainments, in a situation of great usefulness, and in prospect of a greater; but God, in his mysterious Providence, has cut him down, and he is now numbered with the dead, after two days' confinement. Almighty God, prepare me for that solemn event, and do not suffer me to boast of to-morrow, since I do not know what a day may bring forth. Oh! my soul, be more active, more diligent, to secure a mansion in the skies, when thou must quit this earthly one.

Monday, Feb. 25.

Goodness and mercy still follow me, and I have abundant reason to bless God for his manifold favour; I am still enabled to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ daily to the poor and afflicted, and I humbly trust not in vain. May

the blessed Lord still vouchsafe to be my God and guide, to uphold me by His power, to defend me by His Providence, to guide me by His grace, and to bring me, with many more, to His Eternal Glory. Oh! my God, help me to live as I would wish to die; help me to preach a heartfelt gospel, and may I, both by my preaching and living, set forth thy doctrine, and shew forth thy salvation unto all men.

Monday, March 11.

This week I have been disappointed in obtaining apartments where I wished, and had some reason to expect; but Jesus enabled me to say, "The will of the Lord be done;" and I trust that, as I have often found it in past seasons, it will prove so in this,—that God has disappointed me in that I wished, to give me something better; be that as it will, it is my bounden duty to acquiesce in all the appointments of my Heavenly Father, and to do what he would have me, and to go where he is pleased to send me.

The spirituality of his correspondence may be inferred from the following Extract from a Letter, dated 15th August, 1826, written to him by Rev. JOHN EDMUND JONES, Curate of St. Nicholas, Gloucester.

My dear Friend,

THOUGH almost unequal to the task, in consequence of increased suffering, I must attempt, however imperfectly, some acknowledgment of your kind letter. Many valuable communications have I received from Christian friends during the period of my protracted sufferings, not one of which has been more sweet, consolatory, and refreshing to my mind than your own. It has been read to me repeatedly, and will prove, I trust, through your prayers, a help to me through the remainder of my pilgrimage. My experience has been varied, not without seasons of joy and peace in believing, but for the most part my path has seemed to be through the valley of humiliation. A great part of your kind letter was very suitable to my state and

feelings. Let me hear from you again, and in the meantime continue to help me in your prayers to God for me. Pray particularly that my soul may be kept in peace, established in the faith, hope, and holiness of the Gospel; that my remaining corruptions may be subdued, my doubts and fears removed, and my meetness for the heavenly inheritance perfected before the trying hour arrives;* in a word, that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. My heart dictates much, but such are the infirmities which press upon my poor, feeble, dying frame, that I must be content to pour forth only a little of its abundance.

* Mr. Jones, it is said, survived but a short time.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF MARGARET ELIZABETH BRIDGMAN,

Born 6th January, 1836 (the day of Epiphany), died 2nd June, 1837.

It was a winter's day,
  Sweet babe, that gave thee birth;
Bright shone the star Epiphany—
  The light of Christ beamed forth.

Thy life a sweet spring day
  Of hope, and joy, and love;
Like flowers of Paradise, so gay,
  Ripening for worlds above.

It was a summer's day,
  When, drooping on thy bed,
Gently thou breath'dst thy life away,
  And joined the ransomed dead.

Now in continual day,
  In Christ's celestial light,
Sweet babe, with him thou art alway,
  And there is no real night.

No night of racking pain
  Torments thine infant head;
In Jesu's bosom thou art lain,
  By living fountains led.

THE WITHERED GOURD.

4 Jonah, v. 6 & 7.

My pleasant gourd is gone,—my child is fled,
My lovely Marg'ret's numbered with the dead.
Thrice happy child! thou hast escaped away
From earth and sin to Christ and endless day.

Thou wast a very pleasant gourd to me,
Thy opening blossoms much I loved to see;
Fondly I hoped that in my later years
Thou wouldst have been a soother of my cares.

Charmed with this gourd, I solaced in its shade,
And found a cooling shelter for my head,
Unconscious of the worm beneath its root,
Which soon, alas! how soon, devoured its fruit.

God made the gourd which thus delighted me,
And God, he made the worm that withered thee.
The Lord be praised who lent to me thy charms,
Blessed be his name who took thee from my arms.

And thou art gone,—no more I view thy face,
Sweet babe, nor clasp thee in my fond embrace.
Ah, cruel death! thou hast deep wounded me,
But I, through Christ, shall thy destruction see.

My pleasant gourd was grafted in a vine
Whose root was fixed in an eternal clime;
And I and mine, joined by a living faith
To Christ, shall triumph over sin and death.

Then, dearest babe, when the last trump shall sound,
And all the gourds of Christ, once scattered on the ground,
Shall rise again, I then shall see thy face,
And with thee glory in the Saviour's grace.

HYMN SUNG AT THE FUNERAL.

18 Matthew, v. 10, 14; 10 Mark, v. 14.

Lovely babe! thy race is run,
All thy pains and sighs are o'er;
Thou with earthly scenes hast done,—
Life hast gained for evermore.

Hark! thy dear Redeemer says,
High in Heaven's eternal clime;
Her blest angel views the face
Of his Father, and of thine.

Suffer such to come to me,
To my kingdom they belong;
Thou shalt all His glory see,
Christ shall be thy endless song.

It is not my Father's mind
Little ones should ever fail;
Bliss eternal thou shalt find,
Christ for thee must sure prevail.

In the tomb we now must lay
All that's mortal of thy frame,
At the Lord's great rising day
We with thee shall bless his name.

SHE IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH.

8 Luke, v. 52.

Is she not dead, but sleeping,
  Doth my dear Saviour say?
Then, lovely babe, my weeping
  Shall soon depart away.

Not dead, my babe, but sleeping?
  Is this no figment vain?
My eyes refrain from weeping,
  My babe shall wake again.

Oft I have seen her sleeping,—
  Gazed on her infant charms;
Oft seen her smile when waking,
  And clasped her in my arms.

My child not dead, but sleeping?
  Hath not her spirit fled,—
The tomb her body keeping
  Among the silent dead?

Then she *is* dead, not sleeping;
  She will not wake—ah, no!
Nor smile for all my weeping,
  Not rise for all my woe.

Christ says, *not* dead, but sleeping,—
  Truth cannot speak a lie;
Come, Jesus, stay my weeping,
  Unveil *this* mystery.

She is not dead, but sleeping;
  Babes are, saith Christ, my care,—
Safe in my tender keeping,
  Blest in my heaven they are.

She is not dead, but sleeping,
  Unto this world she dies;
Committed to my keeping,
  She from the tomb shall rise.

She is not dead, but sleeping,
  And she shall wake again,
When thou and thine, now weeping,
  Shall with thy Saviour reign.

Dead she is not, but sleepeth,
  And, till that morning rest,
My soul with joy now leapeth
  To see thee reign and blest.

Then all the dead now sleeping
  In Christ in Heaven shall rise,
From sin, and death, and weeping,
  Dwell in his Paradise.

LETTER TO HIS SON,

AGED 14.

Walworth, April 30, 1840.

My dear Son John,

AT five o'clock this afternoon it will be fourteen years since you entered into this world of variety, vanity, and death; then your immortal spirit began to have conscious existence, but the day shall never come when it shall cease to be. Your life, hitherto, has been as free from pain, anxiety, and woe, I may say *freer*, than the vast majority of Adam's sons who live to the age of fourteen,—illness and weakness like that of your dear sister, you have been a stranger to,—*anxiety* about home, food, and clothing you have not known,—and of the sufferings of this present life you have scarcely tasted,—you have read and heard of them in numbers, but they have not reached you,—neither have you been left with a mind untutored and undisciplined, but, according to our means, you have received,

and are receiving, those instructions, which, if pursued in after-life, will at once contribute to your advantage and your happiness. He who delights in study, need never feel alone; he has a resource and a spring of happiness to which others are strangers. One other blessing which I apprehend you cannot *now*, but I trust *will hereafter* appreciate, is, God hath blessed you with parents who have loved you ever since you were born, and prayed for you before you entered the world. Oh, my son, my son, may the God of your mother, and your father, and your father's fathers, be your God,—this day, even *this*, when you have now attained a new and important period of existence,—may you surrender yourself to Him. Your life is *from* Him,—your preservation and well-being are from Him,—*He* hath power to cast the soul of the sinner into hell,—and He alone, through the merits and mediation of Christ, can exalt the saved sinner to Heaven; and doth He not say in his Word, "My son, give me thy heart?" The parent who now writes to you knows that he has your heart, that is, your natural affections, and he deserves them, because he loves you, and, with your dear mother, has continually exhibited that love; but his powers are limited, and he cannot do for you *all* the

good he desires,—his life is limited, and you will probably have some day to follow him to the sepulchre,—but the Heavenly Father is almighty, and ever liveth. Oh! then, my dear son, give Him—God help thee, my son, to give Him—thy heart, and thou shalt have his good Providence to watch over thee, his angels to guard thee, his wisdom to guide thee, his power to defend thee; and when thou shalt lie down thy head on a dying pillow, into the immortal and eternal rest which He has prepared for all that love him, shalt thou enter. A word respecting your *future* condition in life: to us it is yet unknown; I can only say, my dear boy, under God, depend on your own exertions for success and prosperity in this life, and be sure of this, that an active, industrious life will be a far happier condition than an idle or dissipated one; your sleeping hours will be sweeter, and your waking ones more cheerful. Virtue, that is, strict morality, is its own reward in *this* life; *diligence, cleanliness, punctuality, civility,* and *kindness,* will bring to your own mind the rich bounty of self-approbation, and will secure to you the commendation of all whose good opinion is worth possessing and preserving. I will say no more now than that I hope the next period of your life may be blessed with the new birth, the effects of which will enter

with you, and remain in another and eternal world. It is our intention to purchase you a valuable pocket Bible, and present it to you as from this day, with a *request* and *hope* that it will be in after-life the man of your counsel, your guide when in doubt, your defence when in danger, and your consolation when in trouble, and your best companion to the end of your days. Your dear mother is well; your sister has been very drooping, but is better; good Mr. Franklin is gone home, and to-morrow is to be laid, by his son Samuel, in our ground. His life was that of diligence in business, and love to God and man, and his end was peace. God bless you, my dear son; be diligent in your studies; we will care over you, and see you, and happy shall we be to live with you for ever.

Your affectionate Father,

ISAAC BRIDGMAN.

PASTORAL LETTER.

Mount Zion Chapel,
Devonport, April 27, 1842.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

BRETHREN and sisters of each other, and of our mutual Saviour, you will expect, because I promised you, a letter, by the will of God. Grace and peace be with you,—*that* grace which flows from covenant love, and that peace which arises from a consciousness of your interest in the favour which the Lord bears to his people.

I trust that in the temporary absence of your pastor, the Great Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls hath sent, and will yet send unto you, the Gospel of his salvation, by those who have themselves tasted that the Lord is gracious; and whilst the doctrine of Christ flows from their lips, dropping as the rain, and distilling as the dew, the Holy Spirit will attend it with unction and power, and thus nourish your souls upwards and onwards to everlasting life.

You will not, I trust, forsake the assembling of yourselves together in holy convocation, but cheerfully and humbly imitate the primitive church, and be found, from time to time, with one accord, in one place, entering the gates of the Lord's house with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise,—pouring out your hearts unto the Lord in fervent prayer, on him rolling your burden and casting your care; and thus, while his minister unfolds to you the Word of Life, you will sit meekly at the feet of Jesus, imbibing his spirit, learning his truth, and longing to follow his example; thus shall you grow in grace, increase with the increase of God, and your souls shall be as a well-watered garden.

What an unspeakable blessing, dear brethren, is experimental religion ! and how small the value of that which is *not* handled, tasted, or felt ! and may it be theirs who testify to you the things which belong to your peace so to speak, and yours so to hear them, as those who know the grace of God in truth. And what is experimental religion but the life of God in the soul, the light of God in the understanding, the mind of God in the will, the very heart of God in the affections, and the example of God our Saviour in the life ?

They who are endued with this heavenly

calling have indeed an interest in that love, which, as it knew no beginning, knows no measure, and shall never know an end. As fallen children of a fallen Adam, we were in time past children of wrath, even as others, under the curse of a righteous violated law, partakers of a sinful nature, without hope, and without God in the world; but now (being what you are by the grace of God) you are delivered from that curse by the Son of the Blessed, being made a curse for you; you are renewed in the spirit of your minds, being quickened into a new life by the Spirit of God, and now by one spirit, as you have access through Christ to the Father, so truly your fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and as you daily walk and talk with him, so he gives you a good hope through grace, that after this short, and perhaps to some of you stormy and tempestuous life, is over, you shall certainly reach the haven where your longing souls would be, and obtain that rest which remaineth for the people of God. For you thus, as believers in the Lord Jesus, to live in Christ, and for you, as such, to die, will be gain.

But while I am well aware that as the salvation of Christ is a common salvation to all the redeemed, and therefore in its leading features is applicable to all, yet in the family of God there

is a varied experience, peculiar to the circumstances of each disciple. Some of you are young in the ways of the Lord, others of you are tried servants of your Divine Master, and a few of you may be like Aaron on Mount Hor, ready to strip yourselves of all that is earthly, and to put on immortality and eternal life. In all spiritual affection, as from your pastor and spiritual guide, receive in love a word of congratulation, advice, and encouragement.

First. To you, dear youthful disciples of the Lord Jesus, I send, in our Divine Master's name, a word of congratulation, that while so many youths take the downward road of sin to hell, you, by the distinguishing grace of God, have with Mary chosen the good part, which shall never be taken from you. With Samuel you say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" with Moses, you choose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin, which *are but for a season;* with Joshua you say, "Let others do as may seem to them good; as for me, I will serve God;" and with humble Ruth you say to the church of Christ, "Entreat me not to leave you, for thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;" and this covenant God, I trust, *will* be your God for ever, and your guide unto and over death. And now, dear

young people, you have put your hand to the Gospel plough, and may not look back; you have begun the race to endless life, and must not turn back; you are putting on the armour of God, that against your spiritual enemies you may wage a holy and successful war, and at last obtain the high prize set before you.

Dear young people, while in the name of the Lord I congratulate you on what he hath wrought, let me advise, caution, and encourage you with respect to the future. My advice is, walk humbly with thy God; never forget who hath made thee to differ; search the Scriptures daily; pray without ceasing; be watchful against sin, the snares of the world, and that hidden evil of your own heart, of which, at present, you may know but little; diligently and prayerfully use the means of grace; sit not under the Word as judges, but as learners, and if God has given you time and talent, be useful in the Church of Christ,—whether as teachers of babes in the Sunday school,—distributors of godly tracts,—visitors of the sick poor,—and inviters of the ungodly to the house of God; and in every way you can, glorify him who hath called you to his glory. For consider what great things he hath done for you, the infinite debt of gratitude you owe him, and the brevity and uncertainty of that

time which is allotted to you in this present evil world. Beware of the world in all its varied seductions—of sin in every shape—and of your own deceitful hearts; and in every season of sinful temptation call loudly,—fervently call on him, the blessed Lord, who was tempted by the evil one, and by this wicked world, more than any man, and yet without sin.

Finally, keep the high prize of your calling constantly before you, even the end of your faith, the full salvation of your souls, and, looking steadfastly at Christ as your example, consider how, for the joy set before him, he cheerfully endured the cross, and despised the shame. And where is he now but at the right hand of the Majesty on High, where all His faithful followers shall surely be,—for they who endure to the end shall be saved; and we are confident of this one thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will accomplish the same unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and "As thy days are, so shall thy strength be."

To you, dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, who have for years past trodden the pathway to endless life, and who have been, or are now, the subjects of manifold trials,—to you, your minister, brother, and companion in tribulation and patience of the saints, would say in the Lord's

name, " Fear not, but count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; he that is for you is higher than all that can be against you." Varied and complicated as may be your afflictions, yet no temptation hath happened to you, but such as is common to the Lord's family; and he that hath delivered doth deliver, and, we trust, will still deliver you.

As pilgrims and travellers to a better land, you are now called to bear the burden and heat of the day; as soldiers of the cross, it is yours to endure hardness in the campaign; and, as disciples of the man of sorrows, it is needful that the members should be assimilated to their head; while suffering here with Christ, you have a good hope that presently you shall be glorified with him. To him, then,—to him, rather than unto your fellow-creature's ear,—pour out your sorrows and complaints, and make known your varied wants. Your glorious High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, is full of sympathy, and full of power, and what is for your good to receive, will he withhold? Tell him of your fears, he will quell them; of your foes, he will restrain them; and they who hate you for Christ's sake shall be as the ashes beneath your feet.

Dear brethren and sisters in Christ, faint not in the day of adversity, turn not your backs in

the heat of the battle, and refuse not to ascend the hill, though difficult, which leads to your Father, your God, and your eternal home. Look to Jesus, be ever looking to him, and consider how he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. And if ye say, "Jesus, the sun of righteousness, is too bright and glorious an object for me always to gaze on while in my imperfect state," then look ye also to the glorious company of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, and martyrs of the Lamb once slain, who, from age to age, like you, have trod the path of tribulation.

Once they were mourners here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They struggled hard, as ye do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

But brethren, where are they now? How have they triumphed over all their enemies? How have they surmounted all their difficulties? and how have they at length reached the peaceful shore, where Christ and his redeemed are one for ever? Did not they wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb? Did not they overcome all their enemies, and sin, hell, and the world, by the same power; namely, Christ interceding for them in Heaven, and Christ dwelling in them by faith

on earth? And now they stand, and shall for ever stand, clad in white robes, the garments of God's salvation, with crowns of righteousness and glory on their heads, and with palms of victory in their hands; and with songs of full salvation on their lips, they shout, "Salvation unto God and the Lamb for ever and ever." Oh! be ye also followers even unto death of those who now through faith and patience inherit the promises, for he who was and is their God, is thy covenant God also. O believer! for he hath said it, "I will never leave thee, no never, no never forsake thee;" wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope unto the end, forgetting that which is past, pressing on to that which is before, and, through the same grace given unto them, ye also shall reach the same glory.

Sing on your heavenly way,
  Ye ransomed sinners, sing!
Sing on, rejoicing every day
  In Christ, your heavenly king.

Soon ye shall hear him say,
  "Ye blessed children, come;"
Soon will he call you hence away,
  And take his pilgrims home.

Finally, to those of you, beloved in the Lord, who from your advanced age, having passed your "threescore years and ten," or who from pining,

wasting sickness, are looking for a speedy dissolution of all that is mortal, your pastor, himself a dying man, would say as on the threshold of earth, and at the portals of heaven, "Be ye found waiting ready when called to enter into the joy of your Lord." To you, aged pilgrims, and to you, soon to be summoned into the Beloved's presence,—to you, the answer of your prayers years gone by, is about to be given, that when thy Lord has fitted thee for himself, he would kindly take thee to himself, and from a world overflowing with sin and misery of every sort; and from a church, at best in a wilderness state, you are about to go to that

——— land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Where infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

And are any of you on Jordan's banks, standing, lingering, shivering on the brink, and fear to launch away? And do you ask, "What shall I do in the swellings thereof?" What have others done by the grace of God? Turn about, and see in what peace, in what holy triumph, "an Israelite, indeed," a true believer can die. May you and I be like them. Go to the tent of that hoary-headed pilgrim, Jacob, who, at the advanced age of 130 years, said, "Few and evil have my days

been;" and when, just before he gathered up his feet into his couch, he said, "I have waited for Thy salvation, oh, Lord!" and he gave up his spirit. Follow *him* to Nebo's top who had passed full thrice forty years in this wilderness world, bearing the reproach of Christ, and though denied his heart's desire to enter an earthly Canaan, received a kiss from God, and sped his way to a heavenly one. And what to him, one moment after, were all his troubles here below? And hearken unto *him* in a royal pavilion, whose heart's chief desire was to erect a temple for his God. Hear him, while He, the son of Jesse, sings his last and sweetest song on earth, and strikes his harp once more to the praises of love divine. "Although," saith he, "my house be not so with thee, oh God! yet hast thou made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," and "it is all my salvation and all my desire."

And from Old Testament to New Testament saints turn ye and listen, and imbibe their hallowed, raptured spirit as ye listen. Hear aged Simeon say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He wanted to see no more on earth, he closed his peaceful eyes, and awoke in heaven.

Too notable is the instance of him who ranked himself among the chief of sinners, but who, by grace, was not behind the chief of the apostles; who longed to fall asleep in Jesus, that, absent from the body, he might be present with the Lord; and when that day dawned, and the time of his departure was at hand, the confidence he felt when he said, "I know whom I have trusted, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day," did not fail him when that day arrived, but, in the prospect of the martyr's tomb, said, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me." And for thy comfort, oh, dying believer! not to me only, but for all who love his appearing. Possessor of Paul's faith, thou mayest be a sharer in his triumph, and a wearer of his crown, though not called to suffer his martyrdom; and finally, aged, sickly, dying child of the living God, think of Him who was both the chief of saints and the Saviour of sinners, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; who, when He came to die, had not the bright and blessed consolations which pertain to his people, but, in death's dark vale, was forsaken for a season by

His God, yet, at length, said, " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Go, then, believer, and daily do likewise, and doubt not but when thou shalt pass through the valley, it shall be only of the *shadow* of death ; for the rod and the staff of the covenant God shall be with thee. Thus stand waiting for a little season on Jordan's banks, looking by faith beyond them to that city whose maker and builder is God ; to that glory unto which thy God in covenant ordained thee,—which thy gracious Redeemer hath purchased for thee,—and for which the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, hath quickened, sanctified, and prepared thee.

And now, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, I affectionately commend you all, as well the members and communicants, as also the whole congregation, to the kind and gracious Shepherd of the sheep, who ever abides with his flock, and leads them safely to his holy hill of Sion. Brethren, pray for us,—for me that my visit here may be made a blessing to many, and that I may be restored to you at the appointed time, in the fulness of Christ's Gospel, to be blessed and made a blessing unto you and yours.

I remain, dear Brethren,
Your affectionate Pastor and Friend,
I. BRIDGMAN.

The following verses were written a few weeks before his last illness.

THE CHRISTIAN EXILE.

Where is that summer, with eternal sun?
Resplendent glory! ne'er beheld on earth;
And when to us this weary life is done,
Where is that region with its hallowed mirth?
Far from this low, dark land.

Where is the temple of Jehovah shining,—
The sacred portals, and the joyful strains,
Where all the spirits of the just combining
Sing loud hosannas on those blissful plains?
Far from this low, dark land.

There where the Seraphim and Cherubim,
The ancient prophets, and the hoary seers,
And martyred saints, who join in sacred hymn,
With all the ransomed from this vale of tears,
Far from this low, dark land.

There is that summer and that temple shining,
Prophets and martyrs, saints and seraph there,
Where Jesus is; in Heaven all combining,
Shout his high praises, and his glory share.

Spirits, immortal! haste from earth away
To realms of love, and joy, and endless light—
To mansions shining in perpetual day,
Where is nor sin, nor woe, nor death, nor night,
In our Emanuel's land.

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